

Suppose In The Garden

Suppose in the garden I told the snake to go
being the first of women and most true.
Sweet and surfeit the world that you had named,
warmed by the sun at day; at night, by you,
being with you one flesh and unashamed.
Full my love, my life, I had no need.
The serpent could not tempt me on that day
when every seed bore fruit and fruit bore seed.
Suppose in the garden I sent the snake away,
knowing already all I wished to know.

That dawn I watched you leaving through the trees,
my eyes caressing, then I took my path
another way. The cool dew joined the pool.
I joined the floating lilies for my bath,
undid my hair and splashed. The day came full.
I dried where roses dried, and wound my hair,
then gathered in the orchard perfect peach
and plum, heavy grape, and sweet mild pear,
and cradling in my arms the best of each
ran happily to find you and to please.

I waited, watched you coming through the trees.
My arms grew aching at our meeting place.
Already the lump was forming in your throat,
already I saw a difference in your face.
Distressed I dropped and bruised the golden fruit.
Distressed I could not understand the change,
afraid of the new stride, the different stance.
Oh but your eyes, your eyes, your eyes were strange.
They cut me with thorns everywhere they glanced,
and sent me awkward, hurrying for leaves.

-- Zelda Friedman